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## **Rain can't deter hundreds walking for the homeless**

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Mix a dozen local bands together, add an inch of rainfall, turn loose 500 walkers on the streets of Bloomington, and you can raise about \$40,000 for the homeless.

Thus went the seventh annual Homeward Bound walk to benefit those in the community who likely need it the most. Wet [weather](#) dampened no one's spirit or enthusiasm for the yearly venture that has raised more than \$375,000 for various social service agencies in the past seven years.

The walk is 100 percent volunteer-driven, said Kathy Mayer, co-chairwoman of the 5K walk.

"Everything, from the music to the bottled water, is because of volunteers," Mayer said Sunday while awaiting the return of those out walking in the rain.

"To be honest, I was surprised the weather didn't deter people, but everybody is here. Ivy Tech has brought so many volunteers in, along with walking teams. IU has as well. Everybody has just jumped in."

The walk is part of a statewide initiative to raise funds for supportive services for those suffering from hopelessness. Some of the \$64,287 raised in 2008 in Bloomington went to the following agencies: The Centerstone PATH team, the Monroe County United Ministries, Middle Way House, and the Hoosier Hills Food Bank.



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Mayer said donations are still expected to come in. Interested parties can give at [www.homewardboundindiana.org/bloomington](http://www.homewardboundindiana.org/bloomington) for the next 30 days, and the 2009 total can continue to grow.

Hank Stowers waits with the walkers huddling under umbrellas and rain gear before the start of the Homeward Bound walk at Third Street Park Sunday. Monty Howell | Herald-Times



Children play with a parachute to pass time before the Homeward Bound walk Sunday at Third Street Park. Monty Howell | Herald-Times



Cailee Scruggs, right, and her father Justin, far left, wait with other participants for the Homeward Bound walk to begin. Cailee had taken advantage of the face-painting and balloons offered at the kids' activity tent. Monty Howell | Herald-Times